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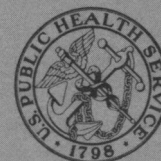
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COVER 3

Talking with young people about HIV infection and AIDS



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
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use in general. While crack cocaine is very available, high school seniors appear to be concerned about its addictive qualities and are less likely to try or continue use." The survey is the 14th in a series conducted annually since 1975 by the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research under grants from NIDA.

In addition to cocaine, the 1988 survey found a decrease in the proportion of seniors who said they had ever used each of the other 18 drugs included in the survey. Furthermore, there was a significant reduction in those reporting current use of any illicit drug, from 25 percent in 1987 to 21 percent in 1988. Dr. Schuster noted, however, that almost 54 percent of seniors had tried an illicit drug by the time they graduated from high school. And large percentages of young people are still experimenting and using many illicit drugs, including marijuana, stimulants, and inhalants, he said.

Marijuana use decreased significantly between 1987 and 1988, yet the rate remains unacceptably high, especially in light of recent data on its harmful effects on brain functioning, Dr. Schuster said. In the class of 1988, 47 percent of seniors reported its use

at least once, 33 percent reported use in the past year, and 18 percent reported use in the past 30 days. The 1988 survey also reported that 20 percent of high school seniors used stimulants and 18 percent used inhalants at least once. Despite a steady decline in drug use among high school seniors, there are still large subgroups in the general population whose drug use patterns are becoming more compulsive and more damaging, he said.

"We are very concerned about these subgroups, especially adolescents who are dropping out of school and becoming involved with drugs. We have heard of major metropolitan areas reporting dropout rates as high as 40 to 50 percent. These young people are more likely to become involved with the criminal justice system and experience problems with drugs," he said.

Data from NIDA's Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN), which collects information on negative health consequences and deaths due to drug abuse, show more than 46,000 emergency room cases involving cocaine in 1987, up from 25,000 in 1986. Cocaine related emergency room cases involving smoking crack or other forms of cocaine increased from 21 percent in

1986 to 30 percent in 1987. The high school senior survey found increases in seniors concerned about the negative effects of marijuana, PCP, and cocaine. Almost 32 percent of seniors saw great risk from even occasionally smoking marijuana, and 77 percent felt that smoking marijuana regularly is harmful. The study also showed increases in the percent of seniors who disapproved of people older than 18 smoking marijuana, and a significant increase in seniors saying their close friends would disapprove if they were to use drugs even once or twice.

Survey director Dr. Lloyd Johnston pointed to newly emerging concerns among seniors about drugs and their effects as important factors accounting for decreases in experimentation and use. The survey found overall rates for alcohol use decreased, yet still remaining high, with 92 percent of seniors trying alcohol at least once and 35 percent reported have five or more drinks in a row in the last 2 weeks. Cigarette smoking by seniors also remains a problem, with 66 percent having tried smoking at least once and 18 percent smoking daily, according to the survey.

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What if your
child asked you
about AIDS?

Talking with Young People About HIV Infection and AIDS

A new Public Health Service publication is designed to help parents and other adults—such as clergy, civic, and youth group leaders—talk with young people about how to prevent infection with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. The "AIDS Prevention Guide" was released by Health and Human Services Secretary Louis W. Sullivan, MD, as the centerpiece of a new phase of the PHS' "America Responds to AIDS" campaign that targets parents and youth.

"Many of us find it hard to talk openly with our children about drugs and sexual behavior—yet these are precisely the areas of behavior that put many young people at risk of HIV infection," Secretary Sullivan said. "I urge parents and other adults concerned for the health and well-being of youngsters to use this guide as an aid in giving young people the information they need to protect themselves."

The "AIDS Prevention Guide"—available free to adults who call the National AIDS Hotline (1-800-342-AIDS)—provides the facts about HIV infection and AIDS, and suggests techniques for delivering these facts effectively. The guide offers tips on starting and sustaining AIDS prevention conversations and includes age-appropriate materials that adults can give directly to children and teenagers. Both English and Spanish versions are available.

The "AIDS Prevention Guide" was developed by the Centers for Disease Control, the agency within the PHS responsible for the prevention and control of diseases in the United States. In developing the guide, the Centers' experts conferred with specialists in the fields of education, child development, health care, biological sciences, and communications. Leading national health and educational associations were also consulted. The guide that resulted has been tested

with parents for readability, usefulness, and effectiveness.

The parents and youth phase of the PHS' "America Responds to AIDS" campaign includes multimedia public service announcements to promote use of the prevention guide and to foster discussions between adults and young people. The PSA campaign—using radio and television announcements, print advertisements, transit cards, and posters—includes messages for general audiences, messages directed to youth, and messages directed to black and Hispanic Americans, who have been disproportionately affected by AIDS. Television announcements are closed-captioned for the hearing-impaired, and the Hispanic PSAs have been produced in both English and Spanish.

All materials include the National AIDS Hotline number. They can also be customized by State AIDS programs to feature State health department sponsorship.

The "America Responds to AIDS" campaign was launched September 30, 1987. In the first phase, PSAs and other initiatives were directed to the general public and to targeted high-risk groups. During this phase the brochure "Understanding AIDS" was developed and distributed to all American households. The second phase of the campaign targeted women at risk of HIV infection and sexually active adults with multiple partners.

From October 1987 through February 1989, "America Responds to AIDS" received more than \$28 million in air time donated by the television networks and their local affiliates, making it the largest federal PSA campaign in the marketplace. "America Responds to AIDS" PSAs were aired more than all other AIDS PSAs combined and reached virtually all U.S. households.



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